

REMARKS

Claims 1, 5 and 6 are presented for consideration, with Claim 1 being independent.

The abstract has been replaced to better set forth the technical aspects of the claimed invention. In addition, a typographical has been corrected in the specification.

In the claims, independent Claim 1 has been amended to better distinguish Applicants' invention. Claims 5 and 6 have also been amended. Claims 2-4 and 7-27 have been cancelled.

Initially, Applicants confirm the election to prosecute the invention of Group I, Species A, of the invention. Non-elected Claims 7-27 have been cancelled.

The drawings were objected to for two separate reasons. In the first reason, the Office Action asserts that the "laminated layer" of Claims 1-6 is not adequately shown. In response to this assertion, the Examiner's attention is respectfully directed to Figure 2C, which illustrates the printed object P, and the elements of the laminating member 2: heat resistive base material layer 2a, laminate layer 2b' that is removed from the heat resistive base material layer and adhered to the printed object P, and the remaining portion 2b'' of the laminate layer which remains adhered to the heat resistive base material layer 2a. The Examiner's attention is also respectfully directed to page 17, line 3 through page 18, line 21 of the specification for a discussion of these features.

The second objection to the drawings relates to the remaining portion 2b'' shown in Figure 2C and described in the specification. This portion is described in the specification, including on page 27, lines 7-12, as a portion that is "yet to be used," as it remains adhered to the heat resistive base material layer 2a of the laminating member 2.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for the reasons set forth in paragraph 13 (page 6) of the specification. Without conceding the propriety of this rejection, Claim 4 has been cancelled. This rejection is therefore deemed to be moot and should be withdrawn.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Stuart '602. Claims 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Okada '354 in view of Kay '914. Claim 5 is rejected as allegedly being obvious over Stuart and further in view of Fournier '698. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 of Applicants' invention relates to a laminating method for forming a laminated layer in the form of a transparent film on a surface of an image on a printed object. The method includes the steps of transferring a laminate having a laminated layer and a heat resistive base material layer to the surface of the printed object for laminating to form a laminated printed object, and a rear edge peeling step of peeling off the heat resistive base material layer from a rear edge portion of the laminated printed object by exerting an active force

on the rear edge of the printed object in the carrying direction. Subsequent to the rear edge peeling step, a front edge peeling step peels off the heat resistive base material layer from the front edge of the laminated printed object.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, a high performance laminating method can be provided.

The Stuart patent relates to a composite transfer sheet for lifting a printed image from a paper backing and transferring it to a substrate. As illustrated in Figures 1-3, a release layer 15 and paper backing 14 are removed from a composite transfer sheet, which is then adhered to a printed image 20 supported on paper backing 21. Subsequently, the paper backing 21 is removed, as shown in Figure 3.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, however, Stuart does not teach or suggest, among other features, a rear edge peeling step and a subsequently performed front edge peeling step as set forth in Claim 1 of Applicants' invention. As understood, in Stuart the peeling is performed in a single step, with no distinction between a front edge and a rear edge. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

The primary citation to Okada relates to a lamination method having a laminate film comprised of a backing m and a laminate layer e applied to an object k.

In contrast to Claim 1 of Applicants' invention, however, Okada is not understood to teach or suggest, among other features, a rear edge peeling step followed by a front

edge peeling step. As understood, the laminating process in Okada shows a front edge being peeled before the rear edge (see Figure 8).

The secondary citation to Kay relates to an image enhancement method and is relied upon for providing a transparent transfer layer. Kay fails, however, to compensate for the deficiencies in Okada with respect to Applicants' Claim 1 as discussed above. The proposed combination, therefore, even if proper, still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

The tertiary citation to Fournier relates to splicing a laminate and is relied upon for its teaching of cutting a laminate and separating a face sheet from a release liner. Fournier fails, however, to compensate for the deficiencies in the cited art discussed above with respect to Claim 1. Therefore, the proposed combination of art, even if proper, still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is therefore respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in Claim 1 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 5 and 6 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

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Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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